

Chapter 2 Strategic Reading

Chapter 1 explains how readers make meaning when they read and why it's important to teach comprehension. The chapter summarizes strategies that proficient readers use and suggests that if we want readers to use them independently, teachers need to show students how we think when we read. We describe the "gradual release of responsibility" approach, which advocates instruction through modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and application.

Chapter 2 goes into greater detail about what it means to read strategically.

Actions and Considerations

- Start a collection of intriguing articles, short stories, excerpts, poems, or other short pieces. Copy and share these pieces and decide on one to read together, with each participant keeping track of their inner conversation with the text. Margin notes and coding the text help you record your thinking to later share those strategies you used to make sense of the piece. Consider:

What strategies proved useful for understanding this text?

What did you do as a proficient reader to understand new information, ideas, or insights?

Notice your questions, ideas, opinions or interpretations and share these. What does paying attention to your own thinking during reading teach you about supporting students as they learn to use comprehension strategies?

Save one of these pieces to share with your students as a model of your ongoing writing/thinking in response to reading.

- Try a similar activity with your students. Choose an interesting or provocative piece of short text. Provide each student with a copy, read it together, and ask students to record their inner conversation on the text or on Post-its. Then ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. The greatest way to enhance understanding is to talk about the text after reading it.

- Observe a colleague as he or she launches comprehension strategy instruction. Record the language used to model and to explain the strategy. Based on the students' responses to the lesson, discuss the effectiveness of the language and overall lesson.

- Four levels of metacognitive awareness and the ways in which readers monitor their thinking about their reading are described in *Strategies That Work*:

Tacit readers. Tacit readers lack awareness of how they think when they read.

Aware readers. Aware readers may realize when meaning has broken down, but lack strategies to fix the problem or repair confusion.

Strategic readers. Strategic readers use a variety of strategies to enhance understanding and monitor and repair meaning when it is disrupted.

Reflective readers. Reflective readers can apply strategies flexibly depending on their goals for reading. They reflect on their thinking and revise their use of strategies. You can observe this reflective stance when students comment with surprise, amazement, or wonder as they read.

Think about two or three students you work with and try to categorize their level of metacognitive knowledge and awareness. Observe and keep track of how each student monitors his or her thinking during reading. Consider the ways you support students to move through this continuum to become more strategic and reflective readers. **{This is a form of a learner profile.}**

- Collect student work—Post-its, response journal entries, texts with margin notes—and discuss it. What evidence is there that students are keeping track of meaning as they read? Can you observe their evolving thinking? Brainstorm some additional ways that students might keep track of their thinking.
- Explore each of the strategies defined on pages 21–25* in *Strategies That Work* in greater depth. Study group participants might work together to add to these definitions. Consider a common language for reading comprehension instruction across ages and grade levels.

*The strategies discussed on pages 21-25 are labeled as the following. The book discusses each in detail and offers suggestions for teachers' reflections.

- (1) Making Connections: A Bridge from the New to the Known
- (2) Questioning: The Strategy that Propels Readers Forward
- (3) Visualizing: Becoming Wordstruck
- (4) Making Inferences: Reading Between the Lines
- (5) Determining Importance: Distilling the Essence of Text
- (6) Synthesizing Information: The Evolution of Thought

Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.